review contained an observation that "It is therefore important that India's trading partners assume their responsibility for assisting India's autonomous liberalisation process for ensuring market access and stable trading conditions for its developing export base". No specific suggestions were, however, submitted by the Secretariat in this regard.

Task Force on Leather Exports

1884. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have constituted a task Force to scrutinise important recommendations made by the Expert Committee on export of leather and leather products ;

(b) if so, the main functions of the Task Force:

(c) whether it is fact that export of leather and leather products has increased over the year,

(d) if so, the extent to which the leather exports have increased in 1992-93 and during 1993-94 ; and

(e) whether the formation of this task force has increased leather exports ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) Yes Sir. A Task Force on Leather and Leather Products has been set up to analyse the factors which hinder the accelerated growth of exports in the Leather Sector and to monitor the achievements periodically with reference to the targets.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Leather & Leather Goods exports increased from Rs. 3076.24 crores in 1991-92 to 3692.48 crores in 1992-93 registering a growth of 20.03%. Export of Leather & Leather Products during the current year i.e., for the period April—November 1993 (latest available) amounted to Rs. 2648 crores as compared to Rs. 2405.03 crores during the corresponding period of previous year. The increase is 10.10%.

(SOURCE: D G C I & S)

(e) The Task Force has been formed recently and it is too early to analyse its import on leather exports.

Financial problems faced by small growers

1885. SHRIMATI CHANDRIKA ABHINANDAN JAIN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of small tea growers are facing acute financial problems due to input-cost;

(b) if so, the action being taken by Government in this regard;

(c) whether there is any proposal under Governments consideration to provide financial assistance to small tea growers in this budget;

(d) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) There has been overall increase in the cost of inputs between 1991-92 and 1992-93.

(b) The following steps have been initiated to help the growers in this regard :—

(i) Revised unit costs for various items connected with tea plantation development have been announced by the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development and the revised costs have been given effect from 1-4-92 by all Commercial Banks and Land Development Banks.

(ii) Area wise standard unit cost of production have been revised by the sub-committee constituted by the Reserve Bank's Standing Committee on finance. The revised costs would serve as an indicator to the short term working capital limit to be determined by the commercial banks for the year 1994-95.

(c) to (e) Tea board provides financial assistance by way of loan, capital subsidy and interest subsidy on bank loans for